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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4659  
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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0021  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2892  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4301  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0091  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1232  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1892  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 002174

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SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO GOVERNMENT-MAOIST AGREEMENT VARY

REF: KATHMANDU 2166

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) Reactions to the August 9 agreement between the Government of Nepal (GON) and the Maoists outlining ideas for future United Nations (UN) involvement in Nepal's peace process (reftel) have varied. Political parties disagreed on whether the agreement was good or bad for the peace process, as did the leaders of civil society. The security forces appeared to view the agreement as a negative development in the process, and feared that the Maoists were getting closer to gaining control of the government. End Summary.

Political Parties Have Differing Opinions

2. (C) Commenting on the August 9 agreement between the GON and the Maoists outlining ideas for future UN involvement in Nepal's peace process have been varied. Anil Jha, Joint General Secretary of the minor center-right Nepal Sadbhawana Party-Ananda Devi (NSP-A), suggested that the Maoists were "falling into a trap" by agreeing to remain in one place with their weapons. Jha added that confinement of the Maoists to camps would allow for easier monitoring by the UN. Bharat Mohan Adhikari, Member of Parliament and Central Committee Member of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), said that "we must cautiously welcome the agreement reached between the government and the Maoists." Adhikari opined that the agreement gave the Maoists the upper hand in negotiations, but that as long as the international community stood strongly behind the Seven-Party Alliance (SPA) government, then the SPA could continue to hold a tough line against the Maoists. Ram Chandra Poudel, General Secretary of the ruling Nepali Congress (NC), said that the

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agreement to confine the Maoists to camps was positive, but incomplete. Poudel said the Maoists must be separated from their weapons before an interim government could be formed.

3. (C) Prakash Chandra Lohani, Co-Chairman of the minor Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP), termed the agreement as

"cunning" on the part of the Maoists. Lohani viewed the letter as a step toward bringing the Maoists into the government with their arms and army intact. Lohani stressed that if the international community did not keep up pressure on the GON to insist that the Maoists be separated from their weapons before entering an interim government, there could soon be "a Maoist People's Government in Nepal." Lohani felt he could not criticize the agreement or the government because any criticism would be seen as an attempt to destabilize the peace process. Minendra Rijal, former spokesperson for the Nepali Congress-Democratic (NC-D), said that the party leadership had not been consulted prior to the agreement, which he opposed because it did not call for the separation of the Maoists from their weapons.

#### Civil Society Leaders Have Differing Opinions

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14. (C) Krishna Pahadi, President of the Human Rights and Peace Society, stated that the agreement was a breakthrough because the Maoist problem "could not be solved in the absence of the UN." Pahadi suggested that the Government of Nepal should mobilize the National Human Rights Committee, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and civil society groups to curb Maoist abductions and extortion, but added that this should only happen after a date was set for the election of a constituent assembly. Subodh Raj Pyakurel, Chairperson of the Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) and a member of the National Code of Conduct Monitoring Committee, said that the agreement was "totally bad" and that he was disappointed in other civil society leaders for pushing the GON into accepting such an agreement. Pyakurel stated that he was unsure of what the GON was trying to accomplish by putting the Maoists into camps without separating them from their weapons.

Security Forces View The Agreement As Negative

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15. (C) A police source close to the Embassy said that the agreement was deceptive because it looked good, but in reality could be twisted however the Maoists wanted to twist it. The source said that the Maoists had declared internally that the agreement was a "victory." The police source said that the police are nervous that the forces in the country are tilting toward the Maoists, making them more powerful; that if the Maoists did not get the result they wanted from political negotiations, they would go back to fighting to gain power. A Major in the Nepal Army (NA) stated that the agreement was "the single biggest concession to the Maoists from the government so far." The Major stressed that, by remaining in possession of their weapons, the Maoists retained the option of walking out of peace talks if they did not get their way. He worried that the agreement would begin the process of allowing the Maoists to enter the government while still in possession of their arms. The Major stated that the Maoists must be separated from their weapons before campaigning begins for constituent assembly elections, not just before election day, for an election to be free and fair.

#### Comment

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16. (C) In our view, UN monitoring of the Maoist combatants in cantonments is a positive step, but we share the grave concern of many Nepalis that allowing the Maoists to retain their weapons will enable them to continue intimidation and violence. The August 9 agreement was by no means suicidal on the part of the government, in that it does not contain any commitment to allow the Maoists into the government while they continue to bear arms. Now that they have the agreement, however, the Maoists will push hard for that outcome. We will strongly reiterate to PM Koirala that the Maoists must be separated from their arms before they enter into any government and will encourage all like-minded Nepalis to campaign to that same end.

MORIARTY